



REZONING

April 21st, 2016

FILE : RZ16-04-04

R-A to S-1 w/CU

Property Information	
Tax Map/Parcel ID	Tax Map 065 Parcel 003A
Address/Location	5114 Riverwood Parkway
Acreage (+/-)	101.85 +/- acres
Current Zoning	R-A (Residential Agricultural)
Existing Use	Public School
Request	S-1 (Special) with a Conditional Use for a Wireless Telecommunications Tower
Commission District	District 3 (Richardson)
Recommendation	Approval

Summary and Recommendation

Owner Columbia County Board of Education and applicant Foresite, LLC request a rezoning from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to S-1 (Special) for Tax Map 065 Parcel 003A, 101.85 +/- acres located at 5114 Riverwood Parkway with a conditional use for a wireless telecommunications tower. Subject property is located within Riverwood and Greenbrier Elementary, Middle, and High school are located on the property.

Adjacent properties are zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) as part of Riverwood Plantation and include residential, utility, and greenspace uses to the south, east, and west, and undeveloped land to the north.

The applicant is proposing to erect a 150' high monopole wireless telecommunications tower approximately 602' 10" (0.11 miles) west from the right of way of Riverwood Parkway and the northernmost entrance to Greenbrier Middle School and approximately 170' west of an existing baseball field. The proposed monopole is located approximately 132' north of the closest building edge of Greenbrier Middle School. Additionally, the applicant is proposing a 10,000 square foot (.23 Acre) lease area that will house the tower and associated structures that is accessed via a proposed 30' ingress-egress and utility easement connecting the lease area to Riverwood Parkway over an existing paved drive. The site and building plans appear to meet standards for height, visibility, security, lot size, and setbacks as delineated in Chapter 18, Article IX of County Code. Additionally, significant screening of the base of the tower, fencing, and associated accessory structures is proposed on the site plan.

Overall, staff is comfortable with the request, but does have some concerns. The applicant has demonstrated that they have considered colocation as a possibility, that it will not provide the coverage improvement that is desired, and that other sites have been considered. In addition, the Columbia County Broadband Utility has commented that increased coverage and capacity would be



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beneficial to the citizens in the area. However, staff's overarching concern is the visibility of the proposed tower and its potential impact on the viewshed of Riverwood Plantation. While this is not a serious concern and legitimately up for debate, staff thought it best to bring it forward. But overall the requested wireless telecommunications tower does appear to pose an improvement for the public good.

Staff recommends **approval** of the rezoning from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to S-1 (Special) for Tax Map 065 Parcel 003A, 101.85 +/- acres located at 5114 Riverwood Parkway with a conditional use for a wireless telecommunications tower.

Interdepartmental Review

A copy of this staff report, including a list of all recommended zoning conditions, is sent to the applicant and owner of the property in question prior to the public hearing.

Comments:

Broadband Utility:

Due to the proximity of the schools in the area and growth in the area, the citizens need improved coverage and capacity in the area.

Building Standards:

Ensure all applicable codes provided by the International Building Code and National Electrical code are met.

Fire Marshal:

To comply with applicable fire codes.

Stormwater Management:

1. If the site improvements will disturb more than one acre, therefore, the proper NPDES permit and associated fees must be submitted to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Columbia County 14 days prior to land disturbance.
2. Stormwater detention will be required unless site improvements result in no net increase in runoff.
3. Stormwater quality will be required if the disturbed area is 5,000 sq. ft. or greater.

Water and Sewer:

Water utility has no lines in the area of the proposed location. There is a private (Board of Education) fire line in the area.

Criteria for Evaluation of Rezoning Proposal

1. **Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.**

The proposed use is suitable.

2. **Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.**

The proposed tower will be visible to adjacent and nearby properties, impacting their viewshed. However, when weighed against the public welfare, the impact is acceptable.

3. **Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.**

The property does have a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

4. **Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools.**

The proposal will not cause an excessive burden on existing facilities.

5. **If the local government has an adopted land use plan, whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan.**

The adopted future development map delineates this property as part of the Evans Area Neighborhoods Character Area. The intent this area is to preserve established neighborhoods and create quality new residential construction at suburban densities. The area is characterized by moderate-density residential development and neighborhoods. Street networks are defined by curvilinear streets and green space is largely provided on individual lots, but neighborhood open space and/or park amenities may also be provided. Pedestrian connectivity is moderate. Future development is desired to be detached, single family homes and occurring at moderate densities with an emphasis placed on building materials and site design standards. The adopted future development plan includes little to guide a decision such as this since no mention of telecommunications towers is provided. However, in staff's opinion, the request is in keeping with the stated intent of the character area. While the tower will be visible to adjacent and nearby property, there is a public benefit to the tower and staff is inclined to be comfortable with the request because of the height and public benefit.

6. **Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.**

Staff is not aware of any at this time.

7. **Whether the proposal reflects a reasonable balance between the promotion of health, safety, and welfare against the right to unrestricted use of property.**

The proposal meets this test.